# Afterlab – Introduction to Afro-Pessimism and Black Nihilism

### Some Background info

#### Two Opening disclaimers:

#### The basic thesis of the Afro-pessimism K

#### A little bit about Frank Wilderson:

#### It’s important to know that rhere are a lot of other people that write about Afro-pessimism besides Wilderson – here are a few names:

Again, this list is not – and could not be – exhaustive:

* Saidiya Hartman – who most-commonly referenced book (in debate) is titled: Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America. Hartman’s work is especially important to arguments about social death.
* Jared Sexton – who has written many things, including Amalgamation Schemes: Antiblackness and the Critique of Multiracialism. We should talk a little about the singularity of anti-black violence.
* Orlando Patterson – who was one of the first (in academic circles) to advance the idea of “social death”. Some of this could be found in the book: Slavery and Social Death. 1982 , although it can be found in other places. It is important to mention that many of the contemporary Afro-pessimists might distance themselves from some of Patterson’s more contemporary arguments.
* Fred Moten – who has written extensively. But, Moten most commonly is quoted in debate rounds from a book called: The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning & Black Study. The piece was co-authored with Stefano Harney pdf is easily-accessible. Wilderson and Moten have debated about “social death”.
* Calvin Warren - I will draw a slight distinction between the “afro-pessimism” K and “black nihilism” – but mostly because of the title of Warren’s prominent article: Black Nihilism and the Politics of Hope. CR: The New Centennial Review
* Vol. 15, No. 1, Derrida and French Hegelianism (Spring 2015), pp. 215-248

### Glossary of terms – this will also help explain the Kritik

#### Anti-blackness and distinction vs. other race theory.

#### Civil Society K and the distinction between that a government policy.

#### Disparate race theory and “color-blind racism”

#### Gratuitous violence

#### Progressivism and reformism

#### Social death and ontological death

#### “structural antagonism”

#### “Unflinching” paradigmatic analysis

#### And…. Terms that often arise when debating the black nihilism thesis:

#### Black nihilism

#### “Cruel Optimism” and Lauren Berlant

#### Spiritual hope

### Terminology that often arises when answering the Afro-Pessimism/Black Nihilism K

#### Essentialism

#### Contingent, not universal claims

#### Fatalism

### A citations that may be of interest

Several core article were mentioned earlier. But, Wilderson review Puar:

Patrice Douglass & Frank Wilderson (2013) The Violence of Presence, The Black Scholar, 43:4,117-123